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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Identical letters dated 8 April 1997 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

Today, 8 April 1997, a colonial Jewish settler shot dead a Palestinian civilian, 24-year-old Asem Arafeh, in the city of Al-Khalil (Hebron) without any provocation. The Israeli occupying soldiers, using so-called "rubber bullets", also shot and killed two other Palestinian civilians, and an estimated 100 Palestinians were injured throughout the West Bank today. Yesterday, 7 April 1997, another colonial settler shot two Palestinians in the village of Kharbata, near Ramallah. One of the wounded remains in serious condition. These perilous developments, particularly the terrorist acts committed by the colonials settlers, represent a new phase in both Israel's escalation of oppressive measures and its hostile political attitude.

It is worth mentioning in this regard that the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, on 3 April 1997, alluded to possible new "Baruch Goldsteins". Goldstein was the terrorist who killed more than 30 Palestinian worshippers in Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi in Hebron on 25 February 1994. Other colonial settlers have actually established a monument on the tomb of Goldstein in his honour. On its part, Israel, the occupying Power, has never implemented Security Council resolution 904 (1994), which was adopted in the wake of the massacre.

Exacerbating the already extremely dangerous situation, the Prime Minister, at a press conference in Washington, D.C., on 7 April 1997, released a barrage of wild statements, reiterating the Israeli intention to proceed with a new illegal settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim to the south of Occupied East Jerusalem. Moreover, the Prime Minister asserted that Jerusalem is an "Israeli city", in full defiance of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, as well as in contempt of every State Member of the United Nations, none of which has recognized Israel's proclaimed sovereignty over Occupied East Jerusalem. Such statements also make a mockery of the agreements reached between the parties to negotiate the future of Jerusalem. Furthermore, when the Prime Minister states that the occupied territory is "our land", he is on the verge of negating the mutual recognition between the Palestinian and Israeli sides and the crux of the whole peace process.

The serious deterioration of the situation on the ground and the increasing threats to the Middle East peace process resulting from illegal and detrimental Israeli actions and policies reaffirm the need for the speedy convening of the emergency special session of the General Assembly, which has been requested by the Arab Group, to take the necessary actions, including the appropriate collective measures by Member States.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 33, 35 and 85, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. Nasser AL-KIDWA
Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations